

**DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY**

**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**UNIVERSITY OF CRETE**

## REGULATION OF UNDERGRADUATE DISSERTATIONS

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### 1. Definition

The undergraduate dissertation constitutes the culmination of undergraduate studies in a Department of Psychology. It may take the form of a systematic review of an area of existing scientific knowledge in psychology, an empirical research project, or the development of a research protocol. It is optional, offering students the opportunity to deepen their engagement with a scientific subject that interests them, to practise research methodology, and to synthesize theoretical and empirical knowledge acquired during their studies. It aims at the synthesis and application of knowledge acquired through the curriculum, the development of basic research skills (such as formulating research questions, conducting an adequate literature review, selecting appropriate methodological tools, and collecting and analysing data), and the critical presentation of findings.

As a learning process, the undergraduate dissertation aims to develop skills in the design, implementation, and writing of a well-documented scientific study.

### 2. Objectives and Expected Outcomes

The undergraduate dissertation aims to help students receive training in scientific research, become familiar with the use of research tools, and develop critical thinking in the analysis, interpretation, and presentation of research data, while also offering the possibility of interdisciplinary linkage where the subject matter permits. At the same time, the undergraduate dissertation may function as a point of departure for students' future engagement in research, constituting an important step for their further academic and/or professional development.

More specifically, the objectives of the undergraduate dissertation are as follows:

Depth of engagement with a field of knowledge: The dissertation allows for intensive study of a specific topic, enabling students to demonstrate their research capacity through an in-depth analysis of the relevant literature.

Development of research skills: The dissertation offers practical opportunities for learning and applying research methods, whether quantitative or qualitative. It familiarizes students with the process of designing a study, collecting data (e.g., psychometric instruments, interviews, experimental procedures), analysing data (statistical processing or qualitative content analysis), and, ultimately, critically interpreting and presenting the findings.

Critical thinking and substantiation: Writing and presenting the undergraduate dissertation fosters critical thinking and encourages reflexive engagement with research methods, thereby strengthening the broader research culture of the Department of Psychology.

Contribution to knowledge: Although undergraduate dissertations do not necessarily aim at innovation, they often produce original findings and may potentially serve as a starting point for future publications or further academic research.

### 3. Requirements and Procedure

3.1. Requirements. Students who are at least in their 7th semester of study and who have successfully completed at least seventeen (17) compulsory courses - which must include Research Methodology in the Social Sciences I and Statistics I - as well as the courses in the scientific field within which they intend to prepare their dissertation, are eligible to undertake an undergraduate dissertation. In addition, instructors may set further selection criteria. The procedure for registering the undergraduate dissertation is described in the semester registration announcement.

3.2. Duration. The minimum duration for the completion of a research-based undergraduate dissertation is two (2) academic semesters and the maximum duration is four (4) academic semesters. An extension beyond the prescribed period is possible following a request for extension submitted by the student, with the consent of the supervisor. The request must be submitted to the Secretariat of the Department and approved by the Department Assembly, following a recommendation from the Undergraduate Studies Committee. In the case of unjustified interruption of the dissertation process or failure to complete it within the

prescribed time, the student loses the right to register a dissertation again with the same instructor.

3.3. ECTS. Students of the Department of Psychology who complete an undergraduate dissertation are awarded 12 ECTS credits towards their degree. Students who do not choose to prepare an undergraduate dissertation must obtain the corresponding ECTS credits from elective courses offered exclusively by the Department of Psychology.

3.4. Topic selection. Students intending to prepare an undergraduate dissertation must contact a member of teaching staff in the Department of Psychology and submit a written research proposal. This text, of an indicative length of approximately two pages, includes the general aim of the study and a general outline of the methodological design together with the corresponding timetable. The dissertation topic may be proposed either by the student, by the instructor, or jointly by both.

Teaching staff may, through announcements on the Department website, propose topics for undergraduate dissertations in specific areas of interest.

The topic of the dissertation should correspond to the student's interests, possess some form of social and scientific significance, and draw on sources that are accessible, available, manageable, and appropriate to the student's capacities. Overly general and panoramic topics should be avoided, as should excessively specialized ones. The topic should be linked to a clear and delimited research question that can be addressed through methodological tools that the student is able to handle competently.

After the student and supervisor have reached agreement, the dissertation topic is registered during course registration at the beginning of each semester under the responsibility of the student, in accordance with the rules governing course registration.

3.5. Supervision. All members of the teaching staff who participate in the implementation of the curriculum of the Department of Psychology through autonomous teaching of a course (Faculty members, Laboratory Teaching Staff, assigned instructors, and contract instructors) may undertake the supervision of an undergraduate dissertation on topics relevant to their disciplinary field and research interests, provided that the topic falls within a branch of psychology, following the expression of relevant interest by students or an invitation by the instructors themselves.

The Supervisor guides students at all stages of the dissertation process, from the literature review and the refinement of research hypotheses, to methodological design and the selection of psychometric instruments, and further to data analysis and the writing of the final text. Supervisors and students meet at regular intervals. The role of Supervisors is advisory and guiding. Students bear sole responsibility for the final product of their undergraduate dissertation.

No Supervisor may undertake the supervision of more than ten (10) undergraduate dissertations. This number may be revised at the beginning of each academic year.

If there are not enough available dissertation supervision places among the teaching staff of the Department, interested students may be allowed to prepare their undergraduate dissertation with two supervisors: a research supervisor from another Department of the University of Crete or from another Department of Psychology outside the University of Crete, and an academic supervisor from the Department of Psychology. The requirements set by the Department of Psychology for the preparation of an undergraduate dissertation remain fully applicable regardless of the Department to which the student turns.

#### 4. Structure of the Undergraduate Dissertation

Categories of undergraduate dissertations. Undergraduate dissertations fall into the following four categories: (a) the conduct of standard primary research; (b) the use of existing datasets, whether publicly accessible datasets or datasets belonging to supervisors - in the latter case this does not constitute new research, but rather a dissertation topic aligned with a study already conducted by the supervisor and involving the re-analysis of the relevant dataset; (c) the conduct of a systematic review (and not merely a narrative literature review) on a specific topic; and (d) the development of a complete original research protocol and corresponding methodology, based on a full literature review on a specific topic, modelled on research proposals submitted to official funding bodies.

Structure of the dissertation text. The structure of the undergraduate dissertation varies depending on the topic under examination and is determined in accordance with the instructions of the supervisor, within whose field of expertise the dissertation thematically falls. Dissertations may, where appropriate, be adapted to the special requirements of the topic, and their structure is determined by the instructor. However, bibliographic references must

strictly follow the current edition of the widely recognized system of the American Psychological Association (APA), whose recommendations for the organization of the dissertation are recommended to be followed.

Detailed writing instructions have been prepared in the form of guides and posted on the Department website, both with regard to the general organization and writing of any scientific paper (Guide for Writing Scientific Papers and Doctoral Dissertations) and specifically with regard to the preparation of a systematic review.

Length. The most important qualities in an undergraduate dissertation are coherence, conceptual clarity, and the overall organization of the text, together with a well-structured arrangement of content. An appropriate length is between 15,000 and 30,000 words, that is, approximately 50 to 100 pages, including all sections, namely the cover page, table of contents, abstract, main body (Introduction, Method, Results, Discussion), list of references, and tables and figures, using the Greek version of Times New Roman font, 12-point type size, 1.5 line spacing, and margins of 2.5 centimetres from the right and left edges of the page.

## 5. Ethical and Deontological Issues

5.1 Approval by the Research Ethics and Deontology Committee (EHDE). Undergraduate dissertations involving primary research must mandatorily obtain approval from the Research Ethics and Deontology Committee (EHDE) of the University of Crete. The required documents and the relevant procedure are described in detail on the EHDE website.

5.2 Plagiarism **One of the most serious forms of misconduct in academic life, with significant ethical as well as legal implications, is plagiarism. Plagiarism is defined as the appropriation of the views, ideas, or expressions of other persons without acknowledging them.**

Plagiarism is, first and foremost, an ethical offence, since a person presents an idea that does not belong to them as their own. It is also a legal offence, since it effectively constitutes the theft of another person's intellectual property and may entail legal sanctions if proven. Above all, however, plagiarism constitutes an unsound scientific practice that leads to the stagnation of scientific knowledge, since knowledge does not develop or become enriched with new ideas, viewpoints, arguments, or judgments.

In academic discourse, reference to the work of others is always made through bibliographic references. If the author of an undergraduate dissertation fails to provide the bibliographic reference corresponding to a stated view, idea, argument, or judgment, then they commit plagiarism, because it appears as though these views are being presented as their own. Even close paraphrasing of another person's views without the corresponding reference falls within the meaning of plagiarism.

Plagiarism may be committed even in the absence of intent, when the author of a text has neglected to mention the sources from which the information included in the text derives. In all cases, writing a dissertation presupposes the student's obligation to acknowledge every idea, concept, finding, or any other intellectual property of another author. Plagiarism checks are carried out through specialized software. Students are invited to consult the Department's Regulation on Ethics and Plagiarism, which is posted on the Department website, for the precise definitions, the guidelines for avoiding unintentional plagiarism, and the penalties provided for possible violations.

By submitting the final text of the undergraduate dissertation to the Supervisor, the student accepts that they have followed the rules of research ethics and deontology in its preparation, as will be explicitly stated in the text in question. Any finding that this commitment has not been respected results in the cancellation of the undergraduate dissertation.

## 6. Evaluation and Grading

6.1. Evaluation. The evaluation of the dissertation concerns the written text of the dissertation. The individual evaluation criteria are determined, as appropriate, by the instructor and may indicatively concern the structure of the text, the correct use of terminology and language, the precise formulation of scientific concepts, the depth and breadth of understanding of the theoretical subject matter addressed by the dissertation, and the proper research design, where required.

The content of the final text of the undergraduate dissertation is shaped under the sole responsibility of the student, taking into account the comments and observations of the Supervisor and acknowledging the contribution of third parties through references to bibliographic sources, wherever and whenever this is required.

More specifically, the evaluation criteria for the undergraduate dissertation include the following:

The degree of originality and difficulty of the topic, as well as the clarity of the aims, methodology, and conclusions.

The internal organization and coherence of the dissertation, its proper format and structure, and the correct use and presentation of references.

The critical appraisal of prior knowledge and contemporary literature, and the connection of the conclusions with the theoretical framework of the research.

The correct use of appropriate methods for the analysis, interpretation, and presentation of research data.

6.2. Grading. The assessment of undergraduate dissertations is carried out by the supervisor or supervisors, where the nature of the dissertation so requires. Where there are two supervisors (an academic supervisor and a research supervisor), the grade is awarded by the research supervisor with the agreement of the academic supervisor.

The grading scale ranges from zero (0) to ten (10), with a minimum increment of half a point. The grades for undergraduate dissertations must be submitted no later than three (3) weeks after the end of each examination period. Grades are recorded by the Secretariat of the Department of Psychology after the relevant evaluation form has been submitted by the supervisor.

Selected dissertations may be presented before an audience at special events in the form of a workshop or one-day conference or, subject to strict conditions laid down by the editorial board, may be published in adapted form in the Department's journal, Eleftherna.

In 2020, the Department of Psychology established the student excellence award "Theoni Velli" in honour of the late Professor of Cognitive Psychology Theoni Velli and her long-standing contribution to the Department. The award is announced annually and is granted to graduates of the Department who have produced an undergraduate dissertation of exceptional quality. The aim of the award is for the Department of Psychology to continue, in the most appropriate way, its tradition in the education of students and in their involvement in

psychological research. The regulation governing the award was published in Government Gazette 6115/B/22.12.2021.

## 7. Register of Undergraduate Dissertations

The Secretariat of the Department maintains a digital record, through the student registry application, containing the following details: the student's full name and registration number, the title of the undergraduate dissertation, the name of the supervisor, and the grade. The supervisor is required to keep the final text of the undergraduate dissertation in their personal archive for at least three years. The register of undergraduate dissertations is made available to the Department of Psychology's Internal Evaluation Group for statistical and reporting purposes.

## 8. Final Provisions

The present Regulation may be amended by decision of the Department Assembly, in order to better serve academic needs and evolving scientific requirements. Any amendment enters into force from the immediately following academic period, unless otherwise specified by the Department Assembly.

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